RAJYA SABHA

Monday, the 31st July, 1989/9th Sravana, 1911 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock, Mr. Chairman in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Power projects from West Bengal pending Central clearance

*181. PROF. SOURENDRA BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) what are the details of the new power projects to be set up in West Bengal which are at present awaiting clearance by the Central Government or by the Central Electricity Authority as on date;

(b) whether it is a fact that investments made so far by the Central Government for power projects in West Bengal have been very low vis-a-vis investments made in other States on this count while the demand for power in the States has been on the rise;

(c) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(d) what steps are being taken to clear the projects and also to increase the installed capacity of power generation in West Bengal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF POWER IN THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY (SHRI KALPNATH RAI): (a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

(a) The details of power projects received from West Bengal which are pending approval of the Central Government or the Central Electricity Authority (CEA) is given below:—

Statement

S. No.	Name of the Project	Installed Capacity (MW)	Remarks
1	Ramman Hydel Project (Stage-I)	36	(i) Replies are awaited from project authorities on various comments of Central Electricity Authority (CEA); (ii) Project involves inter-State aspects between West Bengal and Sikkim which are yet to be resolved; and (iii) Clearance from the environment angle is yet to be obtained by the State Government.
2	Durgapur Projects Ltd. Extention Thermal Project (Unit-7)	110	(i) Terminal facilities for the transportation of coal have to be provided; (ii) Durgapur Projects Limited (DPL) has yet to obtained clearance from the Ministry of Environment and Forests and to comply with the provisions of Section 29 of the Electricity (Supply) Act. 1948.
3	Balagarh Thermal Project	630	(i) This project is under examination in the CEA. (ii) Fuel linkage and availability of water is to be confirmed. Clearance from the Ministry of Environment and Forests is to be obtained by the State Government.
4	CESC DG Sets . .	5×7.5 KVA (5×5 MW)	Received in 7/89. Under examination in CEA.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) In view of (b) above, does not arise.

(d) An incremental capacity of 1681 MW in the State Sector has been tentatively indentified for the benefit in West Bengal during the 8th Five Year Plan period. In addition, 3400 MW are being set up in the 8th Five Year Plan as Central regional projects from which West Bengal would receive its share. To improve efficiency of existing installed capacity, renovation and modernisation of some of the thermal stations in West Bengal is in progress under a Centrally Sponsored Scheme. The State Electricity Board has been requested to further improve the power supply position. The State Government has also been requested to make concerted efforts to reduce the transmission and distribution losses, undertake efficient load management and energy conservation measures.

PROF. SOURENDRA BHATTACHARJEE: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the statement that has been referred to by the Minister practically leaves everything unsaid. For example, the projects, four project, have been mentioned awaiting the approval from the Central Government. In most cases clearance have to be obtained from the department of Environment, but this list does not include the Bakreshwar project which was repeatedly pressed for acceptance by the Central Government. Should we understand that this project was not referred to by the Government of West Bengal to the Union Government, i.e., number one? Regarding part (b) it has been mentioned that expenses on power from the side of the Union Government is not less than in some other States without giving any period. I would request the Minister to kindly substantiate his contention that no discrimination has been made, by giving facts and figures. At the same time, I would request him to indicate the time-frame within which the projects referred to here, in addition to Bakreshwar power would request him to indicate the time-cases also a time-frame should be indicated because after all the Union Government is supposed to be a cohesive body and it cannot be that one hand does not know what the other does. When a particular department is replying to some question, they are doing it on behalf of the entire Government. Therefore, let them indicate how soon these four projects would be cleared and what is the position of the Government of India with regard to Backreshwar power project.

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY (SHRI VASANT SATHE): Sir, let me take the first things first. The hon. Member asked as to what are the projects pending today. I may straightaway say that as far as the Bakreshwar is concerned, it is no longer pending with the Government of India. It has been cleared a long time back. The State Government has now decided to do the project on its own by collecting blood from the people of West Bengal.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Ridiculous. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Well, we hope that they will be able to find Rs. 1,200 crores required for 830 M.W. project in such a farcical manner. As far as the Government of India is concerntd. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: He is insulting the State Government.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Your shouting will not cow me down.

DR. G. VIJAYA MOHAN REDDY: He has no right to say it. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI VASANT SATHE: They must have the courage to listen to the answer. If you politicise the issue, you must also have the courage to listen... (*Interruptions*)

The hon. Member mentioned Bakreshwar project. I am answering him. As far as Bakreshwar is concerned, to us the honour, the patriotism and the blood of the people of West Bengal is very precious and we respect them. Therefore, the Government of India had gone out of its way to do this project. Not only

that. Originally, it was 630 MW project as proposed by the West Bengal Government as back as in 1979. After this proposal was cleared by the Government of India, they could not find any resources, any money, till as late as December 1987. I personally intervened, went to the Government of West Bengal, to its Chief Minister, and pleaded with them that instead of doing a 630 MW project for which they have no resources—the only amount which they had earmarked for the entire Seventh Five Year Plan was Rs. 400 crores, out of which even Rs. 80 crores was not provided—I said "If you cannot find the money, we will try to find money for you" and I presuaded the Soviet Government to agree to allot some of the assistance to this Bakreshwar project in West Bengal. We increased it from 630 MW to 830 MW. Was that not in the interest of the people of West Bengal? And we said, let us do this project. I gave two alternatives to the West Bengal Government. I said either we will do it as an NTPC project which will be the quickest and let the West Bengal Government through its electricity board cooperate and join by contributing whatever amount they can afford, Rs. 300 crores or Rs. 400 crores, or whatever it is, and to the extent of their contribution, we will give additional power, not only the share in the Central project, but additional power that would have come in the 830 MW project if they had contributed Rs. 400 crores, and it would have nearly come to 600 MW of net power. In a 630 MW project done by any State or anybody, let me point out, if their plant load factor as an average which is 38 per cent, is taken, in a 630 MW project they would have got less than 300 MW of power... (*Interruptions*). Have patience; you are an intelligent man. So, we said, what is in the interest of the people of West Bengal, is net power. Now whether you would like to give them 300 MW of net power or 600 MW of net power by spending only Rs. 400 crores! This is what I argued and pleaded. The West Bengal Chief Minister agreed with my point... (*Interruptions*). Let me say this. Hon. Jyoti Basu agreed with me, but some of his political* provoked him... (*Interruptions*).

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: Sir, what is he talking? (*Interruptions*).

SHRI VASANT SATHE: All right, Sir. If it is unparliamentary, I withdraw it. (*Interruptions*) You are not*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please do not use such expressions. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: He is a Central Minister. Our country is a Union of States. There may be certain difficulties, there may be some problems, which may arise. But a Central Minister should not reply in such a partisan way. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI VASANT SATHE: If the word* is unparliamentary, I withdraw it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It will not go on record.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: I said I withdraw it. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: Our country is a Union of States. The State Governments... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI VASANT SATHE: I said I withdraw it. You are not* (*Interruptions*).

MR. CHAIRMAN: He has withdrawn it. The matter ends there. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Sir, is it unparliamentary?

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is not unparliamentary but it is undignified. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: Sir, how can a Central Minister indulge in undignified remarks towards a State? (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have said that he should not use such derogatory expressions towards Members. This applies to both sides. (*Interruptions*)

He has withdrawn it. Let him proceed with his reply.

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*Not recorded.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Let us come to the point. Although the hon. Chief Minister of West Bengal saw the merit in what I suggested, some agent provocateurs in West Bengal... (*Interruptions*) I am not referring to you. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, this is Question Hour. This is a serious thing. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: Mr. Minister, you go to your doctor and get yourself examined first. (*Interruptions*)

PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: Sir, we seek your protection. (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: I will not permit the House to be disturbed like this. You are all senior Members... (*Interruptions*) I am listening to what he is saying. Where I thought it improper, I said so. But I cannot allow the House to be disturbed like this. You cannot go on disturbing him. Let him proceed. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Sir, the net result was that we were willing to help the State and give, for the benefit of the State, 600 MW net power as against what they would have got on their own. Yet they said 'No'. They said that we should pass on bilateral assistance but under the policy of the Government of India Government to Government assistance cannot be passed on to a State project. This has been so in the case of Kerala, in the case of Haryana, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. All these States, which are non-Congress(I) States, agreed to the proposal made by me on these very lines of sharing power on the contribution made by the State Government. It was such a good scheme but the West Bengal Government did not agree. I went further. Sir, this must be cleared once and for all in the interest of the people of West Bengal. We told them that All right, if you do not want the N.T.P.C. to do it, let us do it as a joint venture. Joint venture, just as we did with Himachal Pradesh, Naphta Jhakri is a joint venture.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: Why not State venture? You tell us that only.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: As far as Government of India is concerned, the Government of India has gone out of its way to give maximum help to the people of West Bengal and also to its Government.

Now, coming to these projects, Rammam hydel project, 36 MW.: They have not yet even clarified the queries that the CEA has raised. Bakreshwar is out. Durgapur Projects Ltd.: In this terminal facilities for transportation... (*Interruptions*). I have already given.

Balagarh Thermal Project: This is a recent proposal, just sent in 1989. It has yet to be examined. Environment clearance is not there. Then come to Kolaghat.

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is there.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: They are not able to complete it. If they want 15 years to complete a State project of 50 MW., if this is the efficiency of their West Bengal State Electricity Board...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you deciding on the basis of efficiency of the State Government or on the merits of the project?

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Merits, absolutely merits. Efficiency is also a part of their merit and demerit. Sir, the thrust of the question is...

MR. CHAIRMAN: No thrust, take the words and reply.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Their question is what we are doing, whether we are delaying. No, we are not delaying, we are clearing your projects as expeditiously as we can. Now the ball is in the court of the West Bengal Government. They must complete their projects expeditiously. They should not take 15 years and all these 15 years it is the present Government which has been in power. You can now judge who is responsible.

PROF. SOURENDRA BHATTACHARJEE: Sir, I am unable to understand, the Minister started so much with the quark and tried to resort to witticism, but then his witticism descended to vulgarism. It is not very unexpected because of the state in which they are in the present date. There is a demand for resignation, but at the same time there is a pull back. Therefore, their nervousness is very much understandable.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You put your supplementary.

PROF. SOURENDRA BHATTACHARJEE: If he gives such a long reply...

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have to put your supplementary. This is not a discussion.

PROF. SOURENDRA BHATTACHARJEE: I am coming. He did not reply to my first supplementary. The thrust of my question has been: What is the proportion of Government of India's grant given to West Bengal for developing power projects? That issue was completely ignored.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He is answering it. I am putting your question in short.

PROF. SOURENDRA BHATTACHARJEE: I will get my second supplementary. Let him reply.

MR. CHAIRMAN: In your reply you have said: 'No, Sir." He wanted to know how much you have given to other States and to West Bengal. That is all.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: All right, Sir. Let us see what we have done. Have we been unfair to West Bengal?

MR. CHAIRMAN: You give the figures.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: The figures are ... (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please sit down. Twenty minutes are gone in one question.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Sir, in the Eastern region, with which we are concerned, the State-wise details of anticipated Central investment in power generation projects during the Seventh Five Year Plan are :

Bihar — installed capacity 1550, estimated cost 2330 and anticipated investment by Centre Rs. 523.78 crores;

Orissa — installed capacity 1000, estimated cost 1404 and anticipated investment by Seventh Five Year Plan Rs. 127.20 crores;

West Bengal — installed capacity 2100, estimated cost 2813, and estimated investment Rs. 787.9 crores

So the total in the Eastern region is Rs. 1455 crores, out of which more than 50 per cent, i.e. Rs. 787.9 crores, is going to be invested in West Bengal alone. Sir, this is the positon. Now you have to judge whether...

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is all.

श्री वसंत साठे : हो गयी बोलतां बंद ।

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Sukomal Sen.

PROF. SOURENDRA BHATTACHARJEE: The figures have been given regarding...

MR. CHAIRMAN: You put your supplementary. Are you going to put your supplemenatary, or are you going to give another speech? If you want to put your second supplementary, I have given you the chance. But no speech should be made.

PROF. SOURENDRA BHATTACHARJEE: I am not making a speech. But at least it has to be put in words.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Sukomal Sen.

PROF. SOURENDRA BHATTACHARJEE: The figures given by the Minister concern only the States of a particular region. What about Western India, Southern India or Northern India?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, no, you put your supplementary. That is all. I am not permitting you now. You sit down. Mr. Sukomal Sen. I have called Mr. Sukomal Sen.

SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA: Whole of India should be compared. All the regions have to be compared.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, no, Mr. Chaturanan Mishra...

SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA: Why should there be discrimination?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have called Mr. Sukomal Sen.

SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA: You have every right, but....

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have called Mr. Sukomal Sen. Nothing will go on record. (*Interruptions*) No, no, no, no. Don't disturb. Mr. Sukomal Sen.

SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: The Minister took fifteen minutes to reply and the Member who has raised the question is not allowed more than two minutes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have called Mr. Suomal Sen. No, you are not allowed. I have done what I thought was correct. I have given my decision. I am not going to diverge from it. You cannot challenge my decsion. My decision is firm. Mr. Sukomal Sen, you put your supplementary.

MR. SUKOMAL SEN: On a simple question, our Minister has generated a lot of heat. I know in our country, there are two types of men—Congressmen and gentlemen. So I cannot expect a Congress Minister to have a gentleman like behaviour.

Anyhow, I hope he will reply to my point specifically.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: Mr. Jyoti Basu has said, no Communist is a gentleman. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: Sir... (*Interruptions*)...

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY: They surrendered before Mrs. Gandhi in 1969. ....(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: Sir, the simple point is, whatever the honourable Minister, Mr. Sathe, has said about the West Bengal people giving blood and all that, it is visible, but I am not going into that. People will reply to them in due time. The point is, now the work in Bakreswar has already been started by the Government of West Bengal, but still there is scope for the Government of India to step in. Now, the first part of my question is, though the work has been started by the Government of West Bengal, I want to know whether, in their belated wisdom, the Government of India will now come out with financial assistance for the State sector as the Soviet Union is ready to provide funds and, also, whether that money will be passed on to the State Government for having the project in the State Sector. Part (b) of my question is, all the four schemes are stuck up with the Central Government. The environmental clearance of the schemes has been stuck up with the Environment and Forest Ministries. Who will give the clearance? It is up to the Central Government. I would like to know from the Government whether all these schemes pending with the Central Government will be cleared by the end of this year, along with financial assistance, so that these schemes can be taken up by the West Bengal Government by the end of the Seventh Five-Year Plan. I would like to have a categorical assurance from the honourable Minister.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Sir, as far as environmental clearance is concerned, it is well known that certain requirements have to be fulfilled before the Ministry of Environment can give clearance. Unless the Government of West Bengal clears those issues, what can the Ministry of Environment do? So, you better persuade the Government of West Bengal to fulfil them, and then clearance will be given.

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: But the Plan work is done by you.

अपना काम करते नहीं, सारा हमारे ऊपर डालना चाहते हैं तो फिर बात कैसे बनेगी ।

So, this is one thing. As far as Bakreswar is concerned, I don't want to go back to Bakreswar. But my friend keeps on repeating Bakreswar.

अब इतना उसका बकारा बना दिया बकरेश्वर का इन्होंने कि इसके पास पैसा नहीं तो हम क्या करेंगे । .....
(व्यवधान)

श्री दीपेन घोष : पैसा तो सोवियत यूनियन का है । .....(**व्यवधान**) ...

श्री बसंत साठे : इन्होंने बकरेश्वर का बकरा बनाया, यह मैंने कहा इनसे, कौन सी अन-पार्लियामेंटरी बात कही ? इतने सेंसेटिव हैं कि नाम लेते ही उठ जाते हैं । ....(**व्यवधान**)

श्री दीपेन घोष : पैसा तो सोवियत यूनियन का है । दो परसेंटेज इन्टरेस्ट की दर से सोवियत यूनियन से पैसा लेकर किश्तों में दिया जाता है, 9 परसेंट इन्टरेस्ट हम देते हैं ।
(व्यवधान)

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is, are you going to pass on that money for Bakreswar?

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Sir, I have explained this.

सर, पैसा सोवियत यूनियन जो देती है वह सारे भारत की देती हैं । भारत की जनता की ओर से भारत सरकार को जिम्मेदारी लेनी पड़ती है उसे वापिस करने की । इसलिए यह नीति है कि हम एक राज्य के साथ कोई पक्ष ती व्यवहार, जो दूसरे राज्यों को हम दे रहे हैं, वह बात वैस्ट बंगाल की सरकार के साथ होगी, दूसरी नहीं होगी और... (**व्यवधान**)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Have you given to any other State?

श्री बसंत साठे : हमने किसी को भी नहीं दिया और यह भी मैं बता दूं अभी Sir, I want to state it here in this House that... (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: He said, you have given to Uttar Pradesh.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: No. It is wrong. It is false. I have made it clear. It is false.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Dr. Vijaya Mohan Reddy... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Sir, I want to go on record, with your kind permission, that this amount of Rs. 800 crores which is available for a Central sector project or joint sector project or NTPC project and which we were going to use for Bakreswar, it is our promise that we will use this only for a project to be established in West Bengal, and that is the respect we have for the people of West Bengal.

DR. G. VIJAYA MOHAN REDDY: I would like the hon. Minister to state the policy of the Central Government with regard to giving coal linkages. That is one. Will the Minister state...

MR. CHAIRMAN: There will be no supplementary on this.

DR. G. VIJAYA MOHAN REDDY: Why, Sir?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. I have read everything. I have come prepared.

DR. G. VIJAYA MOHAN REDDY: This is about clearing of the project. It is a very general subject, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No. I have ruled it out.

Extraction of oil in Khoraghat near Assam

*182. SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH MALIK: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item which appeared in "The Hindustan Times" of the 14th July, 1989 to the effect that a